

Mediated Society: Politics, Press and Public between 1880 and 1914

Research Setup

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Introduction

Societies require communication between the leadership and citizenry. In a direct democracy, citizens ‘constitute’ the leadership, which precludes the need for intermediaries. However, with the growth of polities and consequent need for representative democracy, means had to be found to communicate between citizens and their representatives. Even in authoritarian systems, leaders need the means to express their commands and legitimate themselves to their people – be it through displays of power rather than elections. For most of history, such communication focused on elites, but with the development of communication technologies both the possibility and need for wider political communication emerged. Especially the advent of the ‘mass’ media radically changed the possibilities for such communication in society. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the combination of industrialisation, urbanisation, faster printing presses, expanding railways and telegraphs, and increasing literacy enabled for the first time in history the means to communicate with ‘masses’ of people across vast distances. But how exactly did these mass media change the socio-political system?

I write ‘socio-political’ on purpose to inquire into the wider ramifications of mass media rather than the effect on a mere actor or sector in society. How did the mass media affect the social and political fabric as a whole? In which ways were political leaders aided or hindered by these media in implementing and justifying policies? How did the media use politicians to sell news stories, grow their enterprises, and perhaps even try to influence

politics themselves? Did politicians and media develop a close mutually beneficial, or antagonistic, relationship? Did the media serve as a political mouthpiece or critical watchdog? How did politicians and media interact with citizens, whom they depended on and catered to – albeit in different ways? The answers to these questions are important, for they would allow us to understand better the late nineteenth century society in which these media emerged, the subsequent and often dramatic historical developments that followed in the twentieth century, and even our modern ‘hyper mediated’ society. Understanding in which ways society became a continuous mediated negotiation between different social actors would provide us with an enriched perspective on many historical and contemporary developments.

There are different literatures that address parts of these questions. Within the historical literature, there are many studies on the developments of the media.¹ Some studies connect the media to social or political developments, but they are often focussed on national histories, especially of - and between - England and Germany,² or specialised topics such as journalists or media technologies.³ An edited volume by Karsten Eckert takes a broader look at the international media, but focusses exclusively on the run-up to World War I.⁴ Conversely, there are historical works that describe the broader (international) interconnections between different social, political, and technological changes, but take into account the media only in a limited way.⁵

¹ See for example Asa Briggs and Peter Burke, *A Social History of the Media: From Gutenberg to the internet*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Polity, 2009); Frank Bösch, *Mediengeschichte: Vom asiatischen Buchdruck zum Fernsehen* (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus-Verl, 2011)

² Corey Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany: Mass communications, society, and politics from the Empire to the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008); Oron Hale, *Publicity and Diplomacy: With special reference to England and Germany, 1890-1914* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1940); Frank Bösch, *Öffentliche Geheimnisse: Skandale, Politik und Medien in Deutschland und Grossbritannien 1880-1914* (München: Oldenbourg, 2009); Dominik Geppert, *Pressekriege: Öffentlichkeit und Diplomatie in den deutsch-britischen Beziehungen (1896-1912)* (München: Oldenbourg, 2007)

³ Martin Schreiber and Clemens Zimmermann, eds., *Journalism and Technological Change: Historical perspectives, contemporary trends* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2014)

⁴ Georg Eckert and Arne Karsten, eds., *Die Presse in der Julikrise 1914: Die internationale Berichterstattung und der Weg in den Ersten Weltkrieg* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2014)

⁵ Brendan Simms, *Europe: The struggle for supremacy, 1453 to the present* (London: Allen Lane, 2013); C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914: Global connections and comparisons* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004)

Within the social scientific literature, there is a significant body of work on the contemporary relation between (mass) media and politics, much of which also focuses on foreign policy like the historical studies above.⁶ Due to the difficulty of studying the entire media cycle, scholars often focus on one of the following connections: between politics and media, politics and the public (opinion), media and the public, and politics-media-public.⁷ The emphasis here has been on the media relation to the public rather than (political) elites, due to the post-war scholarly interest in the psychology of the masses and public opinion.⁸ Several studies stress the unique dual and sometimes conflicting objectives of the media, in that they provide information to readers, and an audience to advertisers.⁹ Scholars highlight that in studying the media relation to politics and society one should not forget the capitalist nature of the media in interpreting its relations to other actors.¹⁰ A more social theoretic approach, described most notably by John Thompson and often touched on in historical and contemporary studies, highlights the reductions in time and space that the media have brought about. Technological advances have enabled the media to provide information to citizens ever faster and on a wider geographical scale, which in turn has meant that mediated (political) events have enabled a faster and more massive (political) response to these events from media consumers.¹¹ Finally, scholarly work that is relevant from both a historical and theoretical

⁶ For example Y. Bloch-Elkon, "Studying the Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy in International Crises: The United States and the Bosnian Crisis, 1992-1995," *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 12, no. 4 (2007), doi:10.1177/1081180X07307184; A. de Albuquerque, "Media/Politics Connections: Beyond political parallelism," *Media, Culture & Society* 35, no. 6 (2013), doi:10.1177/0163443713491302; M. Goldfarb, "All Journalism is Local: Reporting on the Middle East: how the U.S. and European media cover the same events differently," *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 6, no. 3 (2001), doi:10.1177/108118001129172251

⁷ See B. M. Seaver, "The Public Dimension of Foreign Policy," *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 3, no. 1 (1997), doi:10.1177/1081180X98003001006

⁸ Mathias Kepplinger, "Reciprocal Effects: Toward a theory of mass media effects on decision makers," *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 12, no. 2 (2007), doi:10.1177/1081180X07299798

⁹ Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The political economy of the mass media* (New York: Pantheon, 2002); Hanno Hardt, *Social Theories of the Press: Early German and American perspectives* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1979)

¹⁰ Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*

¹¹ John Thompson, *The Media and Modernity: A social theory of the media* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1995); John B. Thompson, *Political Scandal: Power and visibility in the media age* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000); Frank Bösch, "Europäische Medienereignisse," *Europäische Geschichte Online*, 2010; Simon Popple, "Fresh From the

perspective are the *Gesammelte politische Schriften* of Max Weber, who described the relation between press and politics in the German Empire in which he conducted journalistic work himself.¹²

Despite the major scholarly advances that the above fields have made, our understanding of the (historical) interactions between media and politics is still incomplete. The historical studies often seem to portray the advent of media as having simply ‘mediated’ the traditional processes of politics and international relations – with actors maintaining the same roles and effects being contained within national or bilateral contexts. The historical studies thus generally offer ‘meso’ analyses of particular countries and actors, and are missing both the ‘micro’ analysis of the detailed processes involved in mediated politics and the ‘macro’ analysis of how the developing media-politics interaction fundamentally changed the socio-political system itself. The social scientific studies offer more of these micro and macro perspectives, but they are less historically informed and often seem to assume that mediated politics is generally a postwar phenomenon. In this dissertation, I combine historical and theoretical perspectives to uncover both the intricate and overarching changes in politics brought about by the advent of mass media in the late nineteenth century. By looking at the interplays between domestic and international contexts I hope to describe the ways in which political and media actors evolved together, and to what extent this joint evolution impacted society already at the turn of that century.

Front’: Performance, war news and popular culture during the Boer war,” *Early Popular Visual Culture* 8, no. 4 (2010): 402, doi:10.1080/17460654.2010.513821; Schreiber and Zimmerman, *Journalism and Technological Change*, 53–79; Eytan Gilboa, “Television News and U.S. Foreign Policy: Constraints of real-time coverage,” *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 8, no. 4 (2003), doi:10.1177/1081180X03256576; Sebastian Conrad, *Globalisierung und Nation im Deutschen Kaiserreich*, 2nd ed. (München: Beck, 2010):50-54

¹² Max Weber, *Gesammelte politische Schriften*, 5th ed. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1988)

Methodological Approach

As I am interested in how the emergence of the mass media affected politics and society, I will look at the ‘golden age’ of newspapers between 1880 and 1900 and its immediate aftermath.¹³ The history of media is longer, but this period of exponential expansion of the press marked the first moment in history at which media reached a ‘mass’ audience, which in turn enabled the wider ‘public’ to engage with politics. Smaller ‘elite publics’ had also existed already for several centuries – including the critically engaged newspaper-reading public of the 18th-century coffeehouses that Jürgen Habermas has famously described¹⁴ - but only after 1880 media consumption and thus awareness of politics became widespread. This sudden growth of the press also means that I will use newspapers as my indicator for ‘the mass media’ in my analysis. Radio, television, and internet did not yet exist, and by the time that they came into being, the media was already a mass phenomenon.¹⁵

Having justified the selection of newspapers as indicator for mass media, I also need an indicator for ‘politics’. Here I will focus on monarchs for several reasons: (1) monarchs still constituted the heads of state in all European countries except France and Switzerland and therefore enable useful comparison; (2) despite increasing constitutional constraints monarchs still wielded varying degrees of political power; (3) the facts that they were individuals and well-known by birth meant that they enjoyed a natural ‘fame’ in the media; and (4) as lifelong rulers they allow for longer-term analyses. In addition, a preliminary survey confirms that monarchs played an important role in the (political) coverage of

¹³ Els de Bens, *De pers in België: Het verhaal van de belgische dagbladers gisteren, vandaag en morgen* (Tielt: Lannoo, 1997)

¹⁴ Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2010)

¹⁵ See also Bösch, *Mediengeschichte*; Briggs and Burke, *A Social History of the Media*; Maarten Schneider, *De Nederlandse krant: Van 'Nieuwstydighe' tot dagbladconcentratie* (Amsterdam: Van Kampen, 1968)

contemporary newspapers.¹⁶ There is already a large secondary literature on late nineteenth-century monarchs, but most studies do not connect the monarchs to media.¹⁷ Recent and useful exceptions are Christopher Clark's *William II: The Last Kaiser*, John Plunkett's *Queen Victoria: First Media Monarch*, and Martin Kohlrausch's *Der Monarch im Skandal: Die Logik der Massenmedien und die Transformation der wilhelminischen Monarchie*.¹⁸ However, despite their individual merits these studies generally remain focussed on national contexts rather than a transnational perspective. Conversely, C.A. Bayly's *The Birth of the Modern World 1780-1914* offers this transnational perspective and makes the compelling argument that monarchs reinvented their roles in the context of late nineteenth-century modernity, but as mentioned he spends relatively little time on the topics of monarchs and media.¹⁹ Thus, my study could contribute here by comparing the media experiences and interactions transnationally.

As the study of monarchs and press even within the limited time frame of 1880-1914 would still constitute too vast a research project, I will delineate it further by focussing on the policy area in which monarchs were most politically active: international politics. By 1880 European monarchs were constitutionally constrained to different degrees,²⁰ but most of them still seemed to play a significant role in foreign policy, be it symbolically or in terms of real

¹⁶ For example in: *L'Indépendance Belge*, "Le Président Krüger aux Pays-Bas," December 11, 1900, 1; *Het Nieuws van den Dag*, "Hier en daar: President Krüger en koning Leopold," November 28, 1900, 1, 2; *South Wales Daily Post*, "Ex-President's Intentions: An Appeal to Queen Victoria," November 8, 1900, Extra Special, 3; *South Wales Daily Post*, "Berlin Opinion: Did Leyds Depict a Rosier Situation. A Pointed Question," December 6, 1900, Extra Special, 3

¹⁷ See for example John Röhl, *Wilhelm II: The Kaiser's personal monarchy, 1888-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004); Barbara Emerson, *Leopold II of the Belgians: King of colonialism* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979); Frank Müller, *Our Fritz: Emperor Frederick III and the political culture of imperial Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011)

¹⁸ Christopher Clark, *William II: The last Kaiser* (Harlow: Pearson, 2000); John Plunkett, *Queen Victoria: First media monarch* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003); Martin Kohlrausch, *Der Monarch im Skandal: Die Logik der Massenmedien und die Transformation der wilhelminischen Monarchie* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2005); Laurence van Ypersele, *Le roi Albert: Histoire d'un mythe* (Bruxelles: Labor, 2006)

¹⁹ Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914*; Alexis Schwarzenbach, *Königliche Träume: Eine Kulturgeschichte der Monarchie 1789-1997*, 1st ed. (München: Collection Rolf Heyne, 2012)

²⁰ See also Martin Kirsch, *Monarch und Parlament im 19. Jahrhundert: Der monarchische Konstitutionalismus als europäischer Verfassungstyp: Frankreich im Vergleich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999)

power. In addition, the focus on international politics offers two justifications from a media perspective and two from a transnational perspective. In terms of media, international politics and colonialism – just like the personal stories about monarchs – provided the sensationalist stories that newspapers needed to reach a wide audience (the combination of monarchs and international politics made for particularly appealing news stories).²¹ Also, international politics were far removed from the public and therefore it relied heavily on the press to inform it about events of which it had no first-hand experience.²² In terms of transnational analysis, studying international politics offers a better basis for comparison between national contexts, as the presses of different countries were writing about the same events. In addition, the occasional involvements in the same events allow for rich analyses of the ways in which the presses of different countries were reading, responding to, and perhaps manipulating the presses and monarchs of other countries.

In the same spirit of facilitating transnational comparison, and further narrowing the research, I will focus on the monarchs of Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. As these countries were similar in many respects, I hope to be able to tease out more easily the nuanced differences and their explanations in the relations between monarchs and presses (see method of difference below). These four countries were all in the same geographical region, had (relatively) similar histories, political systems, and levels of industrialisation, and were engaged on the international scene as colonial powers. For the period under investigation this means that I will mostly focus on Kaiser Wilhelm II in

²¹ Simon Potter, “Jingoism, Public Opinion, and the New Imperialism: Newspapers and imperial rivalries at the fin de siècle,” *Media History* 20, no. 1 (2014); Edward Berenson, “Charisma and the Making of Imperial Heroes in Britain and France, 1880-1914,” in *Constructing Charisma: Celebrity, fame, and power in nineteenth-century Europe*, ed. Edward Berenson and Eva Giloi (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010); Felix Axster, *Koloniales Spektakel in 9x14: Bildpostkarten im Deutschen Kaiserreich* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2012)

²² Stuart Soroka, “Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy,” *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 8, no. 1 (2003): 43, doi:10.1177/1081180X02238783

Germany, King Leopold II in Belgium, King William III and Queen Wilhelmina in The Netherlands, and Queen Victoria and King Edward VII in the United Kingdom.

As another manner in which to contain the research volume, I will limit my primary source investigations primarily to the politics and press sides of the story, and base my analysis of the ‘public’ side on the secondary literature. I will do so for two reasons: the (joint) changes in politics and press are my primary interest and by understanding these ‘top-down’ factors I hope to be able to understand better the changes among the public as well; and it is very difficult to research the public’s responses to the press and politics. This is not to say that the public merely played a passive role. As scholars have emphasised, the public was active in how it ‘received’ the press and how it interpreted information in different contexts.²³ However, it is notoriously difficult to gauge how the public was influenced by, and tried to influence, the press and politics. It is already difficult to measure such vague ‘influences’ in modern studies, but due to a lack of historical documents on this aspect it is even more challenging to do so in a historical study.²⁴ Nevertheless, where possible I will also look into letters sent to editors and diaries to form a better understanding of the public’s reaction to the press and monarchs. Finally, I think it will improve my analysis of the behaviours of the monarchs and press if I constantly keep in mind that millions of people were reading the political press communications every day and sometimes even multiple times per day (some newspapers had multiple editions daily).

Overall, the monarchs will function as cases in a type of comparative-historical analysis. It might be unconventional in a historical, rather than social scientific, study to write a more technical explanation of one’s methodology, but I think that spending a few words on it here can help clarify my approach. Besides, all scholars including historians use particular

²³ Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Free Press, 1997)

²⁴ John P. Short, “Everyman’s Colonial Library: Imperialism and working-class readers in Leipzig, 1890- 1914,” 474–75

methodologies, and for a more complex research setup like mine it makes sense to be somewhat more explicit about it. My dependent variable will be the behaviour of the monarch, and my main independent variable will be the press. The press will then interact with other independent variables in that country, such as the local censorship laws (possibly), the degree of professionalization of journalism, parliament, ministers, diplomats, the public and its 'opinion', local technologies and their ownership (e.g. the UK controlled most telegraphs), press organisational structures (more national papers in the UK and more regional papers in Germany, monopolistic positions of the Reuters and Wolff press agencies), and the international balance of power. However, I will not assume that influence will be unidirectional. Rather, I will also try to see how the monarchs, in reaction, influenced the press and the other variables again. On the transnational level, I will compare the similar 'cases' of the monarchs diachronically (over a period of time). Thus, I will investigate how the behaviour of the different monarchs in response to the press was different in the different countries and over time. On the domestic level, I will simultaneously compare the sub-units of the monarch cases both synchronically and also diachronically. In other words: I will compare how for example the ministers, journalists, laws, and technologies surrounding each particular monarch in his or her country were interacting and collectively shaping the monarch's behaviour at a given moment in time, and how the influences of these ministers and journalists on the monarchs changed over time. That said, my focus will be on the spatial rather than temporal comparisons. My cases might not be separated enough chronologically to draw a substantive conclusion about changes over time. Besides, the secondary literature is already clear about how the pre-1880, 1880-1914, and post-1914 periods differed in terms of media. The main scholarly lacuna is how the booming press in 1880-1914 actually transformed society, and I hope to contribute to showing that transformation primarily using the comparison between monarchs and national contexts.

Furthermore, the study will be inductive – making a generalisation about the (historical) relation between media and politics based on a small number of qualitatively studied cases – and will be exploratory or theory generating, rather than (dis)confirmatory or theory testing. However, I will use a hybrid methodology in that in this theory generating, I will both try to uncover the intricacies of the media-politics relationship by comparing the sub-units (‘process tracing’), and perhaps find causal connections by comparing the main units.²⁵ Thus, by looking at how the German monarch interacted with the German press, his advisors, and the German public, I hope to find out in which ways the monarch’s behaviour was exactly affected by the press, and by comparing this German situation to the Belgian, Dutch, and British, I aim to understand whether the journalists, monarchical advisors, or the public generally had a greater impact on monarchical behaviour (and in which way). In this way, I will use a combination of the ‘natural historical’ (process tracing) and ‘comparative-historical’ (causation tracing) methods that Theda Skocpol described in *States and Social Revolutions*.²⁶ Skocpol’s principal cases were countries in which revolutions did occur (China, Russia, France), but she sometimes contrasted these with countries in which revolutions did not occur (Germany, England, Japan), so that she could combine the method of agreement and method of difference to find causal relations.²⁷ I will only use cases in which ‘monarchical behaviour’ did occur, but by using countries in which the monarchs had rather different roles (the British monarch was constitutionally bound and primarily had symbolic power, the German monarch had more political power, and the Belgian monarch

²⁵ See John Gerring, “What is a Case Study and What is it Good for?,” *The American Political Science Review* 98, 341-54 (2004); Kathleen Eisenhardt, “Building Theories from Case Study Research,” *The Academy of Management Review* 14, no. 4 (1989)

²⁶ Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A comparative analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1979)

²⁷ For the original ideas of the method agreement and method of difference, see also John Stuart Mill, *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill: A system of logic ratiocinative and inductive, being a connected view of the principles of evidence and the methods of scientific investigation (Books I-III)*, with the assistance of John M. Robson 7 (Toronto: Toronto UP, 1974)

was constitutionally bound in Belgium but an absolute ruler in the Congo Free State²⁸), I hope to still use the same approach of comparing and contrasting cases that are similar in some ways, but different in others. Finally, Skocpol contends that to understand historical macro processes, the scholar is forced to rely on secondary rather than primary sources of events. However, I will study primary sources at the micro level in order to trace processes, and because these micro-level interpretations will hopefully improve also my macro-level understanding of causal connections.²⁹

The final manner in which I will both organise and limit my research is through a focus on media events. As the number of newspapers after 1880 became so vast, it would be impossible to study them all, even when merely looking for stories related to monarchs. Therefore I will look at specific events in international politics in which these monarchs were involved, and which the media were covering. Media events studies are a relatively new, but burgeoning scholarly approach, particularly useful for understanding processes of globalisation.³⁰ The staging of, interpretation of, (international) reporting on, and reactions to media events showed how the different social and political actors such as monarchs, journalists, and the public interacted. Besides, they provide a way to narrow down the source material. For each of these events, I will analyse a range of newspapers in all four case countries. As it would still be impossible to skim through all the papers, I will make a selection for each country, including national and local newspapers, newspapers from the different ideological perspectives, and papers from the different linguistic regions in the case of Belgium. Some illustrated newspapers and satire magazines will also be included. To

²⁸ See Vincent Dujardin et al., eds., *Leopold II: Ongegeneerd genie? Buitenlandse politiek en kolonisatie* (Tielt: Lannoo, 2009); Paul Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860-1914* (Amherst: Humanity Books, 1988)

²⁹ The argument that macro analyses of social processes should be grounded in micro-level investigations rather than based merely on other macro-level analyses can also be found in James Coleman, *Foundations of Social Theory* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1994)

³⁰ Nick Couldry, Andreas Hepp and Friedrich Krotz, eds., *Media Events in a Global Age* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010); Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz, *Media Events: The live broadcasting of history* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1992); Bösch, "Europäische Medienereignisse,"

understand better the thought processes and actions of the relevant actors behind the scenes, I will complement the newspaper analyses with an investigation of the personal correspondence of the monarchs, meetings reports, diplomatic cables, political pamphlets, and personal documents of the monarchs and their close advisors.³¹ All these documents will then be analysed using different concepts from the theoretical literature. Such concepts will not be forced upon the historical materials anachronistically, but will offer different perspectives for interpreting them. Besides, we sometimes assume that modern concepts do not fit within a historical setting, such as ‘infotainment’, even though this idea (if not our term for it) was indeed already prevalent.³²

In total, I will select four to six media events, preferably ones that the monarchs from all four case countries were involved in, though this might not be feasible. A preliminary survey of digitised newspapers (using optical character recognition) revealed that news stories in which multiple monarchs were mentioned were mostly royal events, such as the funerals of Queen Victoria and King Edward VII. In addition, there was a lot of monarchy coverage in the newspapers, but much of it was not political (though this coverage still underlines the monarchs’ prominence in the media and perhaps their symbolic role). Thus, in the end I might have to use events that concerned singular monarchs, though these events could still be transnational in scope. For now, I will research the first media event and base my further selection on its results (though at least one of the other cases will be related to Leopold II’s Congo Free State).

The first media event will be the journey of ex-President Paul Kruger of the Transvaal to Europe in 1900. The South African War between the United Kingdom and the South

³¹ For an example of an interesting study of the media and monarchy that analyses both newspaper and private documents, see Christoph de Spiegeleer, “Royal Losses, Symbolic Politics and Media Events in Interwar Europe: Responses to the accidental deaths of King Albert I and Queen Astrid of Belgium (1934-1935),” *Contemporary European History* 24, no. 02 (2015), doi:10.1017/S096077731500003X

³² M. Schudson, “Social Origins of Press Cynicism in Portraying Politics,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 42, no. 6 (1999): 1000, doi:10.1177/00027649921954714

African republics of Transvaal and Orange Free State that had started in 1899 had already turned into a gruesome conflict that involved the first instances of trench warfare, guerrilla tactics on the Boer side, and concentration camps on the British side. As it was arguably the first ‘media war’,³³ reports of the atrocities had spread around the world like wildfire. In the midst of this mediated war, Kruger’s arrival in Europe made headline news everywhere. He came to seek mediation in the war from other European powers and therefore requested audiences with the European monarchs. However, Kruger’s requests put these monarchs in difficult positions. The populations of The Netherlands, Belgium and Germany, of whom the Boers were descendants and thus ‘*stamverwanten*’ (kinsmen), massively supported Kruger and his Boers. Yet the monarchs also had to consider national interests, which seemed to go against angering England and risking British intervention in their own colonial policies. Consequently, Kruger’s visit to Europe provides a rich case for analysis: it showed the political role that was ascribed to monarchs, the interplay between domestic and international politics, the cross-referencing of newspapers around Europe and even the world, the effects of media pressure on political decision-making, and more generally the increasing role of the press in international politics. There is a vast literature on the Boer War, including on the role of the media.³⁴ In addition, scholars have studied Kruger’s 1900 visit to Europe and the pro-Boer crowds that he drew,³⁵ but the media-politics dynamics involved in his attempts to meet the monarchs have not yet been analysed.

³³ Potter, “Jingoism, Public Opinion, and the New Imperialism,” 44

³⁴ Donal Lowry, “‘The Play of Forces World-Wide in their Scope and Revolutionary in their Operation [J.A. Hobson]’: The South African War as an international event,” *South African Historical Journal* 41, no. 1 (1999): 87, doi:10.1080/02582479908671886; Mark Hampton, “The Press, Patriotism, and Public Discussion: C.P. Scott, the “Manchester Guardian”, and the Boer War, 1899-1902,” *The Historical Journal* 44, no. 1 (2001); Popple, “Fresh From the Front,” 414; Vincent Kuitenbrouwer, *War of Words: Dutch pro-Boer propaganda and the South African War (1899-1902)* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam UP, 2012), 27–29; Christian Hallstein, “Creating the Enemy: Anti-British Nazi film propaganda,”

³⁵ Johannes Meintjes, *President Paul Kruger: A biography* (London: Cassell, 1974), 250–67; Lowry, “‘The Play of Forces World-Wide in their Scope and Revolutionary in their Operation [J.A. Hobson],” 92; John Fisher, *Paul Kruger: His life and times* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1974), 236–50; Ulrich Kröll, *Die internationale Buren-Agitation 1899-1902: Haltung der Öffentlichkeit und Agitation zugunsten der Buren in Deutschland, Frankreich und den Niederlanden während des Burenkrieges* (Münster: Regensburg, 1973), 218-232

Thesis and Themes

On the basis of the media events around which I analyse the behaviours of monarchs and the press, I put forth the thesis that the (often symbiotic) interactions between the evolving mass media and politics produced a (international) ‘mediated society’ between 1880 and 1914. The mass media did not simply increase the volume of information passing through the ‘public sphere’,³⁶ but altered the very way in which the socio-political system functioned. In a similar effort to update Habermas’ concept, Craig Geoffrey recently described our contemporary situation as ‘mediated public life’.³⁷ However, that term would not work for the late nineteenth century: it has too much focus on the public side. Figures like royals indeed seemed to have become ‘public’ in that their media presence was pervasive, but the audiences themselves were not public yet – arguably that would emerge only in the social media age. Conversely, the ‘life’ suggests too strong a focus on the individual. Consequently, I propose that we think of the late nineteenth century as a first form of a ‘mediated society’, in that media information penetrated all levels of both national and international society and thus came to reshape the worldviews and experiences of the public at large. By informing both the political leadership and citizenry, the mass media had simultaneous top-down and bottom-up effects on the evolution of society.³⁸

To support my thesis, I will analyse the press-monarchs interactions on the basis of a number of themes. These thematic analyses will also structure the chapters, though it is still fluid how they will do so exactly. I have selected the current themes on the basis of my reading of the historical and theoretical literatures, and my preliminary analysis of the Kruger

³⁶ Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*; David Craig, “The Crowned Republic? Monarchy and anti-monarchy in Britain, 1760–1901,” *The Historical Journal* 46, no. 1 (2003), doi:10.1017/S0018246X02002893

³⁷ Geoffrey Craig, *The Media, Politics and Public Life* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2004), 4–5

³⁸ This argument corresponds perhaps most closely to Thompson’s idea of how mass communication reshaped society, in J. B. Thompson, “Shifting Boundaries of Public and Private Life,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 28, no. 4 (2011), doi:10.1177/0263276411408446; Thompson, *The Media and Modernity*

case. The overarching themes are the personalisation of politics (who is being communicated about – the media protagonists), political communication (the manner in which politics are being communicated via the press), and the media as political actors (the press' more political role in determining the content of coverage and therewith effecting politics). As I progress, these themes and the structure will be adjusted.

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